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Foundations and Methodologies of Islamic Research

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Abstract

Muslim researchers have offered a massive biographical library which ran into thousands of volumes. An integral part of this methodological science is the Isnād scheme which culminated and elevated till it became a solid part of basic Islamic principles. In this way most of the methodological studies and research sciences came into existence in the early phase of Islamic traditional era. However, some western scholars have claimed and propagated that there is no major role or contribution by Muslims in the development and promotion of the research. They also asserted that the credit of inception of the research in studying the textual status of the script belonged to the western researchers. This assertion was banged in such a loud manner as some Muslim intellectuals were also affected as well and could not escape with its aftermaths. In this paper an exclusive study has been focused in reference to highlight the paramount contribution of Muslim researchers and historiographers in the field of research in Islamic Studies.

Keywords: *Research, Methodology, Textual Criticism, Historiography, ┌ad┘ th Literature & Manuscript Editing etc.*

Introduction

Research is an indispensable part of human nature. Through this constructive tool humankind achieves the solutions to its crisis throughout the life. Research also plays a vital role in the field of religious studies. The research process passes through the collection of concerned material, arrangement, editing and its critical analysis from which we deduce the conclusions. The quest of research and protecting the knowledge has always been a peculiarity of Muslim academicians. They constituted principles for historiography, *S┘ rah* studies and set a proper branch of knowledge called *Asm┐ al-Rij┐ l.*[1]

The emphasis on the ranking of narrators of transmissions is another very concrete characteristic of Islamic educational methodology. In classifying the

narrators, different traits and categories have been formulated. The paring of *'adl* and sound knowledge with a person earned him the general title of 'trustworthy' (*thiqah*). Among the *mu ╒addith┘ n* some graded more specifically by using these trait*s* to establish twelve categories: the highest being *im┐ m* (امام: leader) and the lowest *kadhdh┐ b* (كذاب: habitual liar). This emphases on the ranking of narrators necessitated access to the biographies of the transmitters involved, and to accommodate this a new science evolved, *al- Jar ╒ wa at- Ta'd┘ l* (علم الجرح والتعد يل), offering a massive biographical library which ran into thousands of volumes.[2]

Similarly, an integral part of this methodological science is the Isn┐ d scheme which culminated and elevated till it became a solid part of basic Islamic principles. The advantage of the system was utilized to the full, and in some cases to extravagant limits, for documenting the ╓*ad┘ th* literature, the storehouse of the *Sunnah*. The *Sunnah* of the Prophet being a basic legal source, it was natural to deal with these documents with utmost care. Thus with the introduction of *Isn┐ d*, a unique science, *'Ilm al-Jar ╒ wa at-Ta'd┘ l'*-the knowledge of invalidating and declaring reliable- came into existence for the valuation of *isn┐ d* and *a ╒┐ d┘ th*.[3]

In this way most of the methodological studies and research sciences came into existence in the early phase of Islamic traditional era. Even some Orientalists acknowledge the fact that Islamic thought is based on a style of scholarship and a number of disciplines developed by Muslims during the first four centuries of the Hijra. The Umayyads' foundation of a centralizing imperial state played a decisive role in "the formative period of Islamic thought," as Professor W. M. Watt called it.[4] Unfortunately some western scholars have claimed and propagated that there is no major role or contribution by Muslims in the development and promotion of the research. They also asserted that the credit of inception of the research in studying the textual status of the script belonged to the western researchers. This assertion was banged in such a loud manner as some Muslim intellectuals were also affected as well and could not escape with its aftermaths. [5]

The reality is however on the contrary, as the western researchers have hardly started the renaissance of Latin and Greek literature in 15th century. The effort of revival of this literature was very much fruitless and unauthentic in connection with the applications of research principles of editing the text. It is an established rule that whenever a manuscript is discovered, it must be compared with its other available scripts whereas their way of editing of the manuscript was merely based on single script study. In the consequence of this methodology, many of the critical mistakes were remained uncorrected. Dr. 'Abd al-H┐ d┘ al-Fa ╓l┘ elucidates the situation consolidating with evidences that shows that in the beginning, European scholars only focused on single script study and at the same time its editing was also without rules. Ancient literature was collected and got published in the above mentioned way without respecting the formal technicalities. [6]

Later on when the ancient literature developed, western scholars adopted the way of collecting the various scripts and after making their comparison, they

preferred to the best option for text while all other abrogated traditions were mentioned in footnotes or endnotes. For this purpose they had set some terminologies to scrutinize the traditions in these ancient manuscripts.

As it was the initial phase in the history of European scholars to edit the text that is why they were not having any identified rules, proper principles and regulations. This early phase sustained till the 19th century, afterward the specific rules were made as well as many books on the same subject appeared on the scene as Dr 'Abd al-H┐d┘ al-Fa╒l┘ has described it.[7]

In the Muslim scholarships, primarily importance was given to verbal transmission and the written shape of the material was considered to be less authentic form of transmission. Direct listening (سماع) was compulsory to promote the knowledge even the reports came up just on the base of writing without *sima'* were not accepted rather these were seen suspicious. Similarly no one was allowed to take any text from a manuscript and transfer to others unless he personally got it from its author or takes author's permission or author's student or downward. This method has been observed in the recitation of the Holy Qur'┐n and its memorization throughout the period till the day. Recitation of the Qur'┐n cannot be acknowledged if it receives from a script not from expert teacher (*Q┐r┘*) who is the part of the chain of *Qurr┐'*. The ulema of early centuries preserved Islamic fundamental sources and sciences with the same way and couldn't recommend the person who depended upon codices (*su╒uf*) only. They declared a person *Su╒┴f┘* who only depended on books and never had been a pupil to a teacher. Al-'Askar┘ (d. 382 A.H.) has elucidated the meaning of Suh┴╒f┘[8], similarly a renowned Arabic poet Ab┴ Naw┐s says in the praise of his teacher that he does not amalgamate alphabets with each other. [9] However, if a student acquired the knowledge through manuscripts and did not listen to the tradition directly from the teacher, he would have to mention it explicitly. As al-Johar┘ (d. 395 A.H.) quotes a maxim of Ab┴ ╓┐ tim:

لجذا الكلب الاناء ، لجذا ولجذا، اى لحسه۔[10]

> "This *lugha* has been written down by Ab┴ ╓┐ tim and I have quoted it from his book *Al-Abw┐b* but have not listened it from him directly"[11]

With the passage of time, it became more difficult to memorize the large numbers of traditions verbally so *wijada* was developed as a popular methodology among the Muslims. Due to the popularity of *wij┐da,* early Arab Muslim scholars constituted specific rules and regulations for editing the manuscripts. In the 4th century (A.H.), these rules and regulations were not only recognized as a science but were also codified in a proper way. Some important works in Arabic language were also produced in this field. e.g. *Al-Ilm┐' il┐ Ma'rifh U╖┴l al Riv┐yah wa Taqy┘d al-Sim┐'* by Qa╓┘ 'Iy┐╓ (d. 544 A.H.), *Muqaddima Ibn al-╖al┐╒* by Ibn al-╖al┐h (d. 616 A.H.) and *Al-Muf┘d f┘ Adab al Muf┘d wal-Mustaf┘d* by al-'Almav┘ (d. 981 A.H.).

I have selected this study for discussion in this dissertation to portray the reality behind the claim of Orientalists in which they exhibited their superiority upon Muslim academicians in the field of research and editing the world

auspicious heritage. We will examine the laborious efforts of Muslims in making it a proper branch of knowledge while taking an evaluation of western participation and contribution in this field. This study will help us in determining the real inventor of research principles and reveal how much veracity, the claim of Orientalists has.

Dr. Mu┌ammad Mus┐┘=af┐ A'└am┘ has also dedicated a chapter to illustrate how Muslim scholars devised a unique system for transmission of knowledge, which helped enormously in both evaluating the accuracy of the information as well as safeguarding it from internal and external corruptions. He tremendously explained the essential ingredients to preserve the knowledge; some main headings are : the hunger for knowledge, personal contact: an essential element for learning, beginning and development of *Isn┐ d* system, the phenomenon of isn┐ d: proliferation, the authentication of *Isn┐ d* and *┌ad┘ th*, establishing trustworthiness, the unbroken chain, a test case with a misleading isn┐ d, preserving books from adulteration: a unique system, conditions for utilizing a book and isn┐ d and the transmission of the Qur'┐ n[12] The textual criticism as applied to Islamic heritage, include the following steps:

1. Collection of available manuscripts of a particular work.
2. Preliminary comparison of the collected manuscripts and choosing a copy which will form a basis for verification.
3. Verification of authorship.
4. Verification of the title of the manuscript.
5. Comparison of manuscripts and determination of the text in its original form or a form close to the original.
6. Finalizing the verification, source of identification of citations within the text, explanation of difficult words, technical terms, personal names, toponyms, vocalization of difficult words, pagination, documentation and preparing index, etc.; and
7. Writing an introduction in addition to identifying the relevant sources and references.[13]

However, the European Orientalists application of methodology of the textual criticism for the verification of the texts of Islamic heritage strongly influenced the procedure of *ta ┌q┘ q al-makh═┴═┐ t* by contemporary Muslim scholars and the codification of these rules by the institution of research in Muslim world during the second half of the 20th century. In process of adoption of this methodology, the term *ta ┌q┘ q* was chosen as an equivalent for the English term "criticism". In classical Muslim usage this term had the meaning of "proving a thing with evidence" and did not refer to dealing with texts. In the modern usage, however, it acquired the meaning of scholarly examination of literary texts with regard to their origin, authenticity, composition, characteristics and history.[14]

Oral and written transmission in Early Islam

As to the question of oral and written transmission of knowledge in early Islam, a contemporary Orientalist Sebastian Günther[15] point of view even more close to the true approach of Muslim historiographers. In his opinion Arabic and Islamic studies have made remarkable progress since the 1980s and a certain

consensus among scholars has emerged. This can be noted in publications such as those by George Makdisi[16] (on the system of education in medieval Islam); Nabia Abbott[17], Rudolph Sellheim, Sadun Al-Samuk, Fuat Sezgin, Manfred Fleischhammer, James Bellamy, Albrecht Noth, G.H.A. Juynboll, Walter Werkmeister, and Gregor Schoeler (on the study of 'sources' and the transmission of knowledge in Islam in medieval times); but also in the studies by Eckart Stetter, Maher Jarrar, Harald Motzki, Stefan Leder and, in recent years, Fred Donner (on the nature of classical Arabic texts). Although different views and controversies regarding the nature and development of the transmission of knowledge in early Islam continue to exist, but the following established facts and conclusions drawn by Sebastian Günther are strengthening to Islamic educational methodological system.

(1) 'Sessions' (*maj┐lis, muj┐lasat*) and circles (*┌alaq┐t*) were held by Muslim scholars for the purpose of teaching, as early as the first decades and throughout the first three centuries of Islam. These scholarly sessions took place at public communal places such as mosques but also at private locations such as the homes of scholars. 'Oral instruction' was the primary method of imparting knowledge. From the last decades of the first/seventh century on, it was used at first for teaching the Qur'┐n and for transmitting prophetic traditions (sing.: *┌ad┘th*, pl.: *a┌ad┘th*). Yet the imparting of knowledge by instruction in lectures, seminars (*mu┌ ┌ar┐t*) and tutorials-soon became a most important method of Islamic education used in all major branches of Arabic-Islamic scholarship throughout the middle Ages.[18]

(2) To a greater extent than in *┌ad┘th*, other branches of Muslim scholarship practiced writing, along with memorizing, to retain information. This was evidently the case as early as the first century of Islam.[19] Hence the continuous interaction of oral and written components in the transmission of knowledge is considered as one of the most important characteristics of early Muslim scholarship. It may at times have resulted in the predominance of one component over the other, yet one did not exclude the other altogether.[20]

(3) Regardless of the fact that there was a strong emphasis on the oral component of imparting and acquiring knowledge, Muslim scholars in early Islam did base their teaching regularly on written material. At first, and in most cases, however, teachers used and produced written material other than 'real' books. Instead they based their lectures and seminars on 'collections' of data and 'lecture scripts' often organized in 'notebooks,' and on 'notes' used as memory aids. Such thematically ordered 'text units' varied considerably in length and content. They may have been prepared either by the teacher himself or by a scholar prior to the teacher's time.

(4) In the course of time, these collections of data gradually gained more definite shape and came to be 'fixed' (in writing, or memory, or both). Some of these old collections became known as the literary 'work' of the scholar who had prepared it initially and had then 'published' it in his

lectures. Some collections were revised, edited and formally published first by a scholar's student(s). 'Titles' were attached to some old collections; others became known simply by the name of their (first or major) 'collectors'. .[21]

(5) Hence it is seen why 'the concept of a book,' as Johann Fuck put it, did not then gain shape in early Muslim scholarship: for it simply was not in the nature of such first collections of data to be 'integral textual entities' with distinct literary features (in terms of language, style and textual shape), which would be inseparably connected to one particular 'writer' or 'author'. Scholars preparing such written collections and lecture scripts, however, were not deprived of 'authorial creativity' altogether: for they expressed their individual opinions and convictions through thematic selection and arrangement of the material they included in their works. Interestingly enough, these lecture scripts and written collections of data from the first three centuries of Islam seem to make up the majority of the 'sources' used by authors of later times when composing their often voluminous compilations.[22]

(6) Although the attitudes of Muslim scholars toward the use of writing and the written word varied,[23] many early authorities evidently practiced writing and used various kinds of written material for academic proposes. As shown above, some scholars did produce (a) 'real' books (such as epistles, monographs and authorial compilation). These books display distinct characteristics such as:

- they were conclusively edited and published by the author himself;
- they often include a preface and/or an epilogue, in which the author expressly addresses 'the reader' (*q┐r┘*); and
- These texts often display a sophisticated system of internal references and/or even cross-references with other works of the given author.[24]

A second category of writings in early Islam comprises (b) the many 'authorial works' such as systematic collections and lecture scripts prepared by scholars, particularly for teaching purposes. Many of these collections are known to have been edited later on by a scholar's student(s) and eventually published, often in the name of the teacher. Finally, there were (c) 'personal notes' that scholars and students took on their research trips and during or after a lecture or seminar. Understandably, these notes were also used by students and scholars as 'sources' when they, at a later stage of their career, composed a work of their own. These seemingly basic insights need to be taken into account when discussing categories and methodologies to be applied in assessing the 'sources' of classical Arabic compilations.[25]

Retention of the material revealed upon Prophet Mu┌ammad (ﷺ) as Holy word of Allah (Qur'┐n) guarded in a high precautious and secured manner. During the time of Qur'┐nic revelation Holy Prophet (ﷺ) strictly banned to write down any other statement uttered by him. Thus the order shows the

highest importance of divine Qur'┐nic discourse, so that it couldn't mix up with any other material. In fact these sorts of steps in ensuring the immaculate accuracy of Qur'┐nic revelation are evident and more obvious, particularly when we look into the principles and methodologies in preserving the ┌ad┘ *th* literature being conserved in the life time of Holy Prophet Mu┌ammad (ﷺ), it realizes effectively how sound were the methods applied in protecting the Qur'┐nic text from corruption at that time.

It would be quite pertinent here to present a detailed account of research methodologies observed and regarded in the field of codification of ┌ad┘ *th* literature. In the subsequent of this study, an honest reader will judge the certainty and veracity of both the fundamental sources of Islam. The second purpose of the study is highlighting the Muslim educational methodology in purifying the relationship of Qur'┐n and ┌ad┘ *th* literature directly with the divine force. We start this discussion by describing some basic principles that have been comprehensively stated Shibl┘ Nu'm┐n┘ in his *'Sirah al-Nab┘ '*, he writes:

The First Principle

The principle of investigation has been laid down by the Qur'┐n itself. The Qur'┐n says "O you who believe, if an evil-doer comes onto you with a report, then inquire strictly"[26] A saying of the Prophet, too, confirms this:

كفى با المرء كذبا ان يحد ث بكل ما سمع ۔[27]

"If one relates whatever one hears from others, it is enough for him to be regarded as a liar."

The Second Principle

The best principle of investigation in order to ascertain the truth of a report is to

see whether the statement stands to reason. This principle, too, has been, enunciated by the Qur'┐n. When the hypocrites started a calumny against 'A'isha, they advertised and propagated this in a way that some of the Companions of the Prophet were misled. The *Sa┌┘ ┌* of *al-Bukh┐r┘* and the *Sa┌┘ ┌* of Muslim both state that even Hassan, the poet, was led to believe it; and consequently was ordered to be punished for libel. The Qur'┐n says "Verily those who brought forward the calumny were a small band among you."[28]

Suy└═┘ (d. 911 A.H.) the author of *Tafs┘r al-Jal┐lain,* a famous commentary of the Qur'┐n, while explaining the word *"minkum"* (from among you), says that by this is meant a group of Muslims. One of the verses of the Qur'┐n that exonerates '└isha and declares her chastity runs thus:

وَلَوْلَا إِذْ سَمِعْتُمُوهُ قُلْتُمْ مَا يَكُونُ لَنَا أَنْ نَتَكَلَّمَ بِهَٰذَا سُبْحَانَكَ هَٰذَا بُهْتَانٌ عَظِيمٌ[29]

"And wherefore, when ye heard it, did ye not say, it is not for us to speak thereof, hallowed be Thou, that is a slander mighty".

In accordance with the general principle, the procedure for an inquiry would have been to ascertain the name of the reporters and then to sec if they were trustworthy. This done, their statements were to be taken. God, however, says that it ought to have been discarded as a baseless calumny. This establishes the principle that an incident that sounds so highly incredible ought to be rejected

outright as false.

Thus the method of inquiry called *"Dir┐ya"* (judging the truth of a report in the light of one's previous knowledge and experience) had made a beginning even in die days of die Companions of die Prophet. Some *fuqah┐'* (jurists) are of the opinion that ablution, or *wud┴*, has to be performed again if one takes anything cooked on fire. When Ab┴ Huraira attributed this narration to the Prophet in the presence of 'Abd Allah Ibn 'Abb┐s, the latter said that if it were so, ablution would no longer stand, even if one drank water heated on a fire.[30] Not that 'Abd Allah Ibn 'Abb┐s considered Ab┴ Huraira a weak narrator, yet he was not prepared to accept this report as it was against *Dir┐ya* (common knowledge and experience). In his opinion, Ab┴ Huraira might have erred in grasping die actual meaning. Side by side with the compilation of books on traditions, the traditionists were engaged in fronting the principles of *dir┐ya*. A few of these principles are given here:

Ibn al-Jauz┘ (d. 597 A.H.) says that if you find any ┌ad┘ th to be contrary to reason and against the accepted principles, then know for certain that it is fabricated. You need not bother about narrators' reliability or unreliability. Similarly, reports that are contrary to our experience and observation and do not admit of any interpretation need not be accepted. Similar is the case with the sayings that direaten people with severe chastisement for trivial errors, or which promise enormous rewards for insignificant acts of virtue (such sayings are mostly currently among the preachers from the pulpit and die unlettered), or die traditions that border on absurdity. Consequently, some of the traditionists hold that the absurdity of the statement is in itself an argument for the falsehood of the reporter. The presumptions given above relate to the reports, but they may as well relate to the reporters, for example, the story of Ghiyath and Caliph Mehdi. The same presumption should hold good relation to the reporter if he narrates a tradition that has not been narrated by anyone else and the person has not even seen the person he narrates from, or when he is the single reporter while the nature of die report warrants die knowledge of the fact to others as well (as Kha═┘b al-Baghd┐d┘ has elucidated the point in die early chapters of his book *al-Kif┐ya),'* or die reported incident, if true, ought to have been narrated by hundreds of persons, for example, if someone says that an enemy pr**e-**vented the pilgrims from making the holy pilgrimage."[31]

The sum and substance of the foregoing discourse is that the following categories of reports are to be discredited without an inquiry into the characters of their narrators:

1. The traditions which are contrary to reason.
2. The traditions that go against the accepted principles.
3. The traditions that belie common observation and physical experience.
4. The traditions that contradict the Qur'┐n or a *Mutaw┐tir ┌ad┘ th* (repeatedly corroborated tradition), or go against a decided consensus of opinion *(al-Ijm┐' al-Qa═┘)* and do not conform to any interpretation.
5. The tradition that threatens severe punishment for a minor fault.
6. The tradition that promises big rewards for trivial acts of piety.
7. A tradition narrated by a single person who has never personally contacted

the man from whom he narrates.

8. A tradition concerning an incident so noteworthy that, if it had actually taken place, it ought to have been related by many, and yet there is but a single narrator to report it.[32]

Mulla 'Al┘ al-Q┐ r┘, in his book *al-Mou╒┴'┐ t,* has elaborated certain criteria for judging the authenticity of a *╘ad┘ th*, and has cited examples, which we summarize hereunder:

1. Any ╒ad┘ th full of nonsense that the Prophet could never have uttered; for instance, the saying "If one recited لا اله الا الله محمد رسول الله (There is no god but Allah and Mohammed is His Messenger), god creates out of his words a birth with 70 tongues, each tongue having 70,000 words of the Kalima."
2. Any ╒ad┘ th that runs contrary to observation and experience, e.g., "Brinjal is the cure for all diseases and ailments."
3. Any ╒ad┘ th that cancels another ╒ad┘ th of established authenticity.
4. Any ╒ad┘ th that states something against actual experience, e.g., "One should not take one's bath in water heated in the sun, as it causes leprosy."
5. Any ╒ad┘ th that does not sound like a prophet's utterance, e.g., "Three things improve eyesight, namely, green meadows, flowing water, and a beautiful face."'
6. Any ╒ad┘ th that predicts the future, specifically the exact date and time, e.g., such an incident is to occur on such and such a day, in such and such a year.
7. Any ╒ad┘ th that looks like the words of a physician, ie.g, "Harisa [a land of sweet preparation consisting of wheat, meat, butter, cinnamon and aromatic herbs] gives vigor to a man" or that "a Muslim is sweet and loves sweets."
8. Any ╒ad┘ th that is obviously wrong, e.g., "'Iwaj ibn 'Unaq was 3,000 yards [2,742.8 meters] in height."
9. Any ╒ad┘ th that contradicts the Holy Qur'┐ n, e.g., the saying that die life of the world is to be 7,000 years. Were it true, anybody could tell when the Day of Judgment would come, although it is established from the Qur'┐ n that no mortal knows when the Last Day will come.
10. Any ╒ad┘ th that describes that efficacy and merits of the various chapters of the Holy Qur'┐ n, diough many such traditions are found in the com mentaries of al-Bai╔┐ w┘ and the *Kashsh┐ f.*[33]

It was on the basis of these principles that the traditionists rejected many sayings, for instance, the ╒ad┘ th that the Prophet had exempted the Jews of Khaibar from the payment of Jizya (capitation tax), and had given them a written document to this effect. Mulla 'Al┘ al-Q┐ r┘, while rejecting this saying, has given some solid reasons as well.[34]

Unique Methods for Preserving Manuscripts:

While introducing the early Muslim educational methodologies, Azami explains the ways of preserving books from adulteration as a unique system in the very initial stage of Islamic educational and traditional history in which different terminologies and principles applied for the systematic and consolidated study of ╒ad┘ th have been highlighted. He elucidates as "To

preserve their integrity from the glosses and adulterations of future scholars, a unique method was applied to these works which is still unparalleled in literary history. Based on the same concept as the transmission of ╓*ad*┘ *th*, it entailed that any scholar relaying a collection ╓*ad*┘ *th s* had to be in direct contact with the person he was transmitting from, since he was essentially bearing witness about him in written form. To use a book without hearing it from the author (or conversely, reading a copy to the author) made the culprit guilty of giving false evidence. Bearing in mind the law of witness, the following methods were recognized for obtaining knowledge of ╓*ad*┘ *th*; each bore its own rank, some requiring more extensive contact than others and consequently receiving a superior status."[35]

Comparison of Manuscripts

It is necessary for a research editor to make it conform firstly to how many manuscripts are available in existence. If there are two or more manuscripts of one title, the task might become easier because the inaccuracies of each other can be detected with the help of each other. In case of more than one manuscripts ancient of them would be standard (*Nuskhat ul Um*) for comparison, all the inconsistencies with this manuscript would be written down in footnotes. Applying this method we may find assistance in determining the correct text. Surprisingly when we put a glance back to Muslims educational history we trace that these principles were applied in its best formulated form in fourth century.

Q┐ ╒┘ Iy┐ ╒ (d. 544 A.H.) most clearly explains that for an editor it is essential to tally word by word all obtainable manuscripts with original one so that he may get with this comparison study an absolute assurance and confidence. Similarly he should neither rely on the script of any authentic astute scholar nor his self written material unless he makes its comparison with original manuscript.[36] Even during the 1st century after hijra a highly full-grown tendency was observed in this regard, it is reported that ╓a ╒rat 'Urwa Bin Zubair asked his son Hisham, have you written down? Hisham replied yes, I have written. Hadrat 'Urwa Bin Zubair asked again have you compared your written material with any of the other correct and reliable script. ╓a ╒rat 'Urwa prohibited writing like this.[37]

Im┐ m Sh┐ fa'┘ and Ya ╒y┐ Ibn Kath┘ r used to say that one who writes and doesn't make comparison with original manuscript is like the person who inters in the bathroom and comes out without getting himself clean and purified.[38]

Whenever differences generate among the manuscripts, it is found clearly that Muslim scholars and researchers were used to deal the case in the same manner in which modern researchers of the day are applying their methods i.e. in case of variations Basic Script (*Nuskhat ul-Umm*) adopted to be the standard for all other secondary script's inadequacies, difference of transmissions and addition or deletion mentioned in the footnotes of N.U along with the indications of particular signs and abbreviations etc from which we know about the alterations and alternators.

The best example of this principle practically has been delivered by Y┐ q┴t al-╓amav┘ (d. 626 A.H.) while describing the biography of Mufadhal al ╕ ab┘

(d.178 A. H.), he writes: He has many *Mufa╒alat* and *Mufa╒alat* are meant the selected poems or verses of him those have been written by Mahd┘ . There are many variations in several places of the manuscripts but the most authentic and original manuscript is that was reported by Ibn al-'Arab┘ .[39]

Correction of Errors in Manuscripts

Early Muslim scholars had emphasized that a manuscript should never be corrected its errors unless the certainty becomes more clear after an intensive securitization. Similarly, it was also necessary for an editor to mention the error while indicating to its correct appearance. *Q┐ ╒┘ 'Iy┐ ╒* explains this principle, according to him the Ulama's treatment to the transmission has always been in a tremendous style. They transferred it in the same way, they received and while copying them they never used to make any correction. However, learned people pointed out the mistakes while listening, speaking and writing as footnotes not as original text. But some scholars have been found to dare correcting the errors in the text *Q┐ ╒┘ Abul Walid al Waqshi* is famous in this conduct.[40] However, they assumed lawful to make correction in the Qur'┐nic text. 'Almav┘ explains that a book can not be altered or corrected without the permission of the author except the Holy Qur'┐n that is necessary to be corrected whenever found any written mistake.[41]

Early Muslim scholars have formulated the rules and terms while indicating the methods for the rectification of texts. This great concern of Muslim scholars show that how significant that matter was to them. But the most important point is that not a layman is allowed to involve in the process of correction or rectification of a textbook, rather this is only authoritatively permitted for those who have expertise in this field.[42]

The Isn┐d System: A Sound Method of Preservation

Among the plenty of methods, which were used in the early days for the dispersion of the second basic Islamic source *'sunnah'* of the Prophet, gave birth to *isn┐d*, and were the rudimentary beginning of this system.

Mu╖═af┐ A' └am┘ quotes an important and significant statement of *Ibn Sirin* (d.110 A.H.) about the formal binning of *isn┐d* system.

> "They did not ask about the *isn┐d*, but when civil war-Fitnah- broke said 'Name to us your men'; those who belong to Ahl al-Sunnah, their tradition were accepted and those who were innovators their traditions were neglected."[43]

This statement gives the impression that the *isn┐d* were used even before the *Fitnah*, but the narrators were not so particular in applying it. Sometimes they employed it and, at others, neglected it; but, after civil war, they became more cautious and began to inquire about the sources of information and scrutinize them. At the end of the first century the science of the *isn┐d* was fully developed…There are ample references to asking and enquiring about the *isn┐d* in the first century of the *Hijrah*.[44]

James Robson discusses the matter profoundly and presents the over all point of view of Orientalists in his celebrated article "*The Isn┐d in Muslim*

Traditions".[45] He quotes Sprenger who has pointed out that 'Urwah (d.94), used no isn┐d and his writing to 'Abd al-Malik (c.70-80), does not contain isn┐d and it was only later that he was credited with it. (See Robson, op.cit, p.19) Same is the view of Caetani, who holds that in the time of 'Abd al-Malik (c.70-80), more than sixty years after the Prophet's death, the practice of giving isn┐d did not exist. So, he concludes that the beginning of isn┐d system may be placed in the period between 'Urwah and Ibn Ishaq (d.151). In his opinion the greater part of the isn┐d was put together and created by traditionists belonging to the end of the second century, and perhaps also by those belonging to the third.[46]

These assertions show the incapability of Orientalists' research. According to A' ┗am┘ the main difficulty which arises in searching for the sources of Urwah is the lack of original work existing in a separate form. The available material is only in the form of quotations. It was left to later scholars to quote certain lines from the work as they were wanted. 'Urwah had personal contact with most of the companions so his authority must have been a single name or the very person who was present at the incident. Hence, the isn┐d consisted of a single name. And it is easy to omit or overlook a single man's name in quoting. The other versions of his work, especially the one transmitted by Zuhr┘, have *isn┐d*. 'Urwah even uses composite *isn┐ds* in the writing, as well as the single one.[47]

In short, the isn┐d system is a most reliable and authentic method to protect the text form adulterations. Surprisingly, this system can never be seen in any other religion of the universe except Islam.

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References

1 The most comprehensive and authentic work in this category is *Tahdb┘b al-kam┐l by* al-Mizz┘ Yusuf ibn al-Zak┘ (d. 742 A.H./1341 C.E.). 'Al┐ al-Din al-Mughka'┘ (d. 762 A.H./1361 C.E.) completed it in thirteen volumes. Al-Dhahab┘ (A 748 A.H./1347 C.E.) brought out an abridged version of this book. Many other traditionists also produced its abridged versions or companion-books. Based on material, Ibn ╓ajar (d. 852 A.H.) at last compiled a voluminous work, *Tahdh┘b al-tabdb┘h*, into 12 volumes. It has recently been published from Hyderabad Deccan (India). The author remarks that it took him eight years to compile it. Another popular work in this line is the *Miz┐n al-i'tidal* by Al-Dhahab┘, to which Ibn ╓ajar has made further additions in his book *Lis┐n al-M┘z┐n.*

2 Mu╖═af┐ A' ┗am┘, *History of the Qur'┐nic Text: From Revelation to Compilation* (Leicester: Islamic Academy, 2003), p. 175.

3 Mu╖═af┐ A' ┗am┘, *Studies in Early ╓ad┘th Literature with a Critical Edition of Some Early Texts* (Suhail Academy Lahore, Pakistan, 2001), p 213.

4 Mohammed Arkoun, *The Notion of Revelation: From Ahl al-Kitāb to the Societies of the Book*, (Die Welt des Islams, New Series, Bd. 28, Nr. 1/4 , Brill, 1988), p.73.

5 Ramaz┐n 'Abd al-Taww┐b, *Manahij ta╒q┘q al-Turath bain al Qud┐m┐ wal Mu╒dith┘n* (AL-Qahira: Maktabah al- Khanj┘, al Qahira, 1986), p 4.

6 Al-Fa╓l┘, 'Abdal- Had┘, *Ta╒q┘q al Tur┐th,* Maktabah al-'Ilm (Jadd┐ : 1982/1406), p 8

7 Ibid, p 16

8 Al-'Askar┘ ╓assan b. Sa'┘d 'Abdullah, *Shara╒ m┐ yaq'u f┘h al-Ta╖ ╒┘f wal-Ta╒r┘f* (Al-Qahira:Maktabah Mu╖═f┐ al-B┐b┘ al-╓alb┘, N.D), p.13

9 Rama╓┐n 'Abdul Taww┐b, *Man┐hij Ta╒q┘q al-Tur┐th bain al Qud┐m┐ wal Mu╒dith┘n,* p 16.

10 Johr┘, Ab┴Na╖ar Ism┐'┘l, *T┐j al-Lughah wa╕i╒ ╒al-'Arabiyyah (*Beirut: D┐r I╒ya al-Tur┐th al-'Arab┘, Vol. 2, P 569.

11 Ibid.,

12 See M.M. A'┗am┘, *History of the Qur'┐nic Text: From Revelation to Compilation,* pp 165-193. A very similar study in the same methodology has been rendered by the same author titled "*Studies in Early ╒ad┘th Literature with a Critical Edition of Some Early Texts*" in which he presents the whole depiction of ╓ad┘th preservation as well as methods employed to establish the authenticity of Islamic texts. In this chapter most of the assistance in form of sketch and order has been taken from the mentioned books while the original sources also remained under study along with them, see Orientalists criticism on ╒ad┘th literature in the work of Coulson, N . J., et al. '*European Criticism of Hadtth Literature*',in Beeston, A. F. L., (ed.)*Arabic Literature to the End of the Umayyad Period*, Cambridge: Cambridge University Press 1983, pp. 317-321, also published first time from Suhail Academy, Lahore, Pakistan 2001.)

13 Ibid.; also see for more detail Fikret Karcic, Textual Analysis in Islamic Studies: A Short Historical and Comparative Study, Islamic Research Institute, Islamabad, Occasional Paper No. 75, 2007, pp.37-39

14 'Abd al-H┐d┘ al-Fa╓l┘, *Ta╒q┘q al-Tur┐th*, p. 32

15 He belongs to Department of Near and Middle Eastern Civilizations, University of Toronto, Canada.

16 Emeritus Professor of Arabic and Islamic Studies, University of Pennsylvania, Philadelphia and author of *The Rise of Humanism in Classical Islam and the Christian West* and others.

17 Nabia Abbott, a well-known Orientalist who conducted a broader study on papyri and ┼*ad┘th* literature. According to him, the traditions of Mu╒ammad as transmitted by his Companions and their Successors were, as a rule, scrupulously scrutinized at each step of the transmission, and that the so called phenomenal growth of Tradition in the second and third centuries of Islam was not primarily growth of content, so far as the ┼*ad┘th* of Mu╒ammad and the ┼*ad┘th* of the Companions are concerned, but represents largely the progressive increase in parallel and multiple chains of transmission, See *Studies in Arabic Literary Papyri*, Qur'┐nic Commentary & Tradition, Vol: 2, The University of Chicago Press, 1967.pp.1-

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2.

18 Sebastian Günther, *Assessing the Sources of Classical Arabic Compilations: The Issue of Categories and Methodologies*, British Journal of Middle Eastern Studies, Vol. 32, No. 1, May, 2005, p.77.

19 The papyrus fragments studied by Nabia Abbott (1957) support this view. They directly and convincingly verify the existence of an already developed stage of historiography in the second half of the second/eighth century; c f. her Studies in Arabic Literary Papyri… (Historical Texts). See Op.cit. In footnote, p.77

20 Sebastian Günther, *Assessing the Sources of Classical Arabic Compilations: The Issue of Categories and Methodologies*, p. 77

21 Ibid.,

22 Ibid., p.78

23 The necessity and usefulness of close contact between teacher and student can also be explained by the peculiarities of the Arabic script and, consequently, by the difficulties in reading and understanding unvocalised Arabic texts. This fact helps to understand why 'aural transmission' was considered as the best and most trustworthy method of transmission in classical Islam. As 'aural transmission' is a more accurate description of what took place than 'oral transmission', modern scholarship would be well advised to use the former term when describing Islamic education in medieval times. For the religiously based hesitations prevalent among many early Muslims to put a statement of the Prophet into circulation in written form, and for the issue of alterations in ╓*ad┘ th* texts (through shortening or expansion), see "*Assessing the Sources of Classical Arabic Compilations: The Issue of Categories and Methodologies*", p.78.

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25 Ibid., p. 79.

26 Al-╓ujr┐ t, 49: 6.

27 *Muttafaqun 'Alaih*

28 Al-N╙r, 24: 11.

29 Al-N╙r, 24: 16.

30 Tirmaz┘ , *al-Sunan, B┐ b al-Wu╓╙',*

31 Shbl┘ Nu'm┐ n┘ , *S┘ rh al-Nab┘* , and in Mansoor Moaddel and Kamran Talattof, (Eds.), *Contemporary Debates in Islam; An Anthology of Modernist and Fundamentalist Thought* (New York: St. Martin's Press, , 2000), P.55

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33 Ibid., pp.55-57.

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35 A' ╘am┘ , *History of the Qur'┐ nic Text*, p. 178

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38 Ibid.

39 ╓amav┘ , Ab┴ 'AbdullahY┐ q┴t, al R┴m┘ , *Mu'jam al-Udab┐ '* (Beirut: D┐ r I ╒y┐ ' al-Tur┐ th al-'Arab┘ , Vol: 19), p.167.

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41 'Almav┘ , Op.Cit. p.131

42 See for detail Ibn al-╖al┐ ╒, Taqi Ud-d┘ n, 'Amar bin 'Uthm┐ n, *Ma'rifat Anw┐ "Ul┴m al-╓ad┘ th* (Bombay: Al-Ma═ba'at al-Qayyiah, , 1357A.H), pp.95-96.

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